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BROWNBACK, SENATE COLLEAGUES INTRODUCE RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT IN IRAN

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today introduced a resolution with Senate colleagues expressing a sense of the Congress concerning the continuous repression of freedom of expression and assembly, and of individual human rights in Iran.

“The Iranian students and pro democracy activists who so recently risked everything to voice their pleas for democracy, rule of law and freedom need and deserve an expression of support from the United States,” Brownback said.

“In recent months several members of the press and other individuals who peacefully criticized the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran were assassinated by elements of the Iranian government’s security forces. Freedom of the press has been systematically curtailed, along with individual freedoms and civil rights. This was what the Iranian students were reacting to when they demonstrated in the streets in numerous Iranian cities just two weeks ago.

“These pro-democracy activists need to know that the world has heard their voices and that the world is watching and aware of the pressure and repression to which they are being subjected. This is an untenable situation and it should be loudly and categorically condemned by all free nations of the world.

“Though the news of the repression in Iran is no longer a front page story, the savage abuse of human rights continues and innocent people who have done no more than ask for freedoms which the western world considers basic, are being arrested and threatened.

“Reportedly more than 1,400 people were arrested and though some have been released, the Iranian authorities have warned that some of those released would be re-arrested once the investigation into the disturbances is complete. Now, compounding the situation, the Iranian press reported yesterday that the Iranian judiciary has approved draft legislation that could in effect outlaw almost all forms of political criticism of the regime, including public demonstrations and talking to most foreigners,” Brownback said.

The Brownback-Lieberman resolution, among other things, condemns the repressive actions taken by the Iranian government against the democratic movement of Iran. It calls upon the Iranian government to respect the fundamental principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to release unharmed the student leaders and the other pro democracy activists the government continues to detain.

Joining Brownback were Sens. Lieberman, Lott, Mack, Graham, Helms, Wellstone and Wyden. Brownback is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.